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ABSTRACT

This publication is comprised of the biographies of eight individuals designated in the past and nine individuals currently designated as outstanding, successful students from Pennsylvania's adult basic and literacy education (ABLE) programs. Each biography is accompanied by a description of the sponsor program. The past outstanding students are indicative of individuals who have gone on to further accomplishments. The individuals, the year in which they were named outstanding student, and current position are as follows: (1) Anna Mae Kuchta, 1989, teacher's aide; (2) Howard Brown, 1992, community development leader; (3) Theresa Banford, 1993, director, Student Support Services; (4) Ruth Salters, 1994, family center counselor; (5) Romona Mercer, 1995, behavioral health assistant; (6) Linda Mallery, 1996, Family Literacy Program teacher; (7) Madeline Rosado, 1997, network administrator; and (8) Carlos Baretto, 1998, community outreach volunteer. These outstanding students for 2001 are profiled: Kevin Sites; Yolanda Medina; Shirley Burns; Sharon Louise Wallace Heath; Clara M. Snyder; James Lamar Groff; Carmen Martinez; Robert Ceselsky; and Susan M. Sprenkel. (YLB)



Past, Present & Future

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF ADULT BASIC & LITERACY EDUCATION



Honoring Outstanding Adult Students in Success Stories

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BUREAU OF ADULT BASIC AND LITERACY EDUCATION

Basic education services for adults in their roles as workers, citizens and family members

Adult basic education programs funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE), provide a full range of instructional services for adults. **Adult Basic Education** (ABE) is designed for adults who wish to improve basic reading, writing, and math skills. Instruction is given in the context of adults' daily lives to assist them in meeting their educational needs and goals. **GED instruction** is provided to adults in the five areas of the General Educational Development (GED) battery of tests: Social Studies, Interpreting Literature and the Arts, Science, Mathematics and Writing Skills, to assist them in acquiring a Commonwealth Secondary Diploma. **English as a Second Language** (ESL) classes provide instruction in speaking, understanding, reading and writing the English language for speakers of languages other than English in the context of everyday activities such as shopping, health, children's schooling and work. All programs develop an individual plan of learning for learners that enables them to achieve their personal and educational goals. **Family Literacy** is a family focused program targeting parents and children with intensive education and family support. Adult education interacts with Parent-and-Child-Together Time and Parent Time as well as early childhood instruction, enabling adults to be successful parents, workers and citizens and their children to achieve their potential at school. **Workplace Education** provides workers with contextual curriculum for on-the-job basic skill needs such as reading and interpreting manuals, computation and measurement, and writing reports and is delivered in partnership with employers.

As a result of their participation in adult basic education program services, adult learners:

- Improve basic skills
- Obtain a high school diploma or its equivalency
- Become more self-sufficient
- Get better jobs
- Improve their English
- Obtain citizenship
- Become partners in their children's education
- Participate more fully in the life of their communities

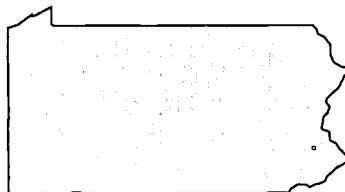


Past, Present & Future

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF ADULT BASIC & LITERACY EDUCATION



Honoring Outstanding
Adult Students in Success Stories



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Success Stories

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Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit 16



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

Dear Fellow Pennsylvanians:

Pennsylvania's Adult Basic and Literacy Education programs have helped countless Pennsylvanians achieve their education goals. The publication you are about to read is a testimony of these accomplishments.

During my tenure as Governor, Michele and I have worked to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have the opportunity to receive a quality education. My Administration has made dramatic investments in adult-literacy programs, summer reading programs and "Read-to-Succeed" -- a \$100 million multi-year reading initiative that helps to ensure students read at the third-grade level by the time they complete third grade.

When people cannot read, they cannot fully participate in the workplace or community. To succeed in today's rapidly changing marketplace, it is vital that people learn valuable skills in reading, math and writing.

"Success Stories: Past, Present and Future" should serve as a guide and inspiration to all Pennsylvanians pursuing their educational and professional goals.

Sincerely,


Tom Ridge

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Teacher's Aide

**Anna Mae
Kuchta**



"Learning is the best gift in life I could give myself."

GREATER PITTSBURGH LITERACY COUNCIL

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (GPLC) provides literacy in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, GED preparation, instruction in English for foreign born adults, job preparation skills, workplace literacy and family literacy. In 1997, GPLC opened a learning center that uses the latest methods of computer assisted instruction and in the year 2000 it opened a second computer lab. At the present time, 900 students from Allegheny County are studying basic skills in instructional programs ranging from classes that meet three hours a week to those which meet 30 hours a week. The success of the program is measured by students' academic gains and life changes such as learners getting a job and leaving the welfare rolls.

During the past five years, GPLC has been called on to be a site for national projects. The National Center for Family Literacy selected GPLC as one of 15 agencies in the nation for the Families for Learning project. The National Institute for Literacy and others chose GPLC as one of the four agencies in the nation to conduct a Literacy AmeriCorps project.

GPLC's philosophy is to help students set realistic short-term and long-term goals and to work towards the completion of those goals. Many students are taught in one-to-one tutorials and others are in small groups of three to eight students. Instruction is individualized to meet the unique needs of each student. The Council has a professional staff of 35, with more than 600 volunteers participating in the program.

Past Potential Realized

ANNA MAE KUCHTA

Eleven years after Anna Mae Kuchta represented adult new readers as one of Pennsylvania's Outstanding ABLE students of 1989, she has fulfilled her promise of helping others even as she herself has become independent. When Anna Mae had trouble with reading in public school, she was sent to an institution for students with learning difficulties. During her eight years at the institutional school, she was drilled occasionally from the same first grade reader but spent most of her time assisting mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed children to dress and bathe. She knew that she was different from the other students and at 16 persuaded school officials to allow her to leave school and get a job. Anna Mae then convinced a dietician at a southside hospital to give her a chance. The dietician hired her the very first day because of her positive bedside manner and ability to deliver the trays to the correct patient.

When Anna Mae was released from the school to her parents, her home life was not easy. Married at 18, she lived in an abusive situation and soon had two babies. After several years, Anna Mae realized that abuse was not normal and at 26, she struck out on her own accepting public assistance for six years in order to raise her young children. When her children were old enough to take care of themselves after school, Anna Mae left public assistance and worked at jobs that required few literacy skills in order to support her family.

In 1988, she was diagnosed with dyslexia and severe hearing problems. With her children now grown and a desire to learn, she enrolled in the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council's (GPLC's) Project Learn and was matched with a tutor. It wasn't until this point in her life that she was taught to compensate for her disabilities and set realistic goals. Her desire for learning did not diminish her desire to help others. She counseled new students, edited the student newspaper, founded a support group for literacy students and served as part of GPLC's tutor training effort as well as on the United Way's task force on literacy.

Today, Anna Mae works as a teacher's aide at Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh's Literacy Program. Working with students who have developmental disabilities, many of whom are dyslexic, she is reminded of a time when she couldn't read her mail or write a letter or shop for groceries. Now she can do all of those things and is able to show her students strategies that she worked out for herself. "What's more," she says, "I want reading to be fun...I sit down and I make up pictures and I make up flash cards so that they think they're playing a game but they're not. I find that they learn better that way and I'm able to build up my skills because I have to sit down and think about what I am going to teach the students in the classroom."

Through her experience as an aide, she realized that her goal in life was teaching others. She believes that if she had had the opportunity to learn to read earlier in life, she would have a degree in teaching. Anna Mae says, "Learning is the best gift in life I could give myself. . . it gave me a whole new life and a new respect for life."

Community Development Leader

**Howard
Brown**



"I think my greatest achievement was going back to school, getting my GED and changing my whole life around."

CONNELLEY TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AND ADULT EDUCATION CENTER

Connelley Technical Institute houses the post-secondary division of the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Curricular offerings range from basic literacy instruction to vocational, technical, clerical and medical licensing programs. Connelley's mission is to provide comprehensive educational programs that offer opportunities for all adults to acquire, maintain and advance their skills in order to make them employable and self-satisfied. The ABE and GED Programs have provided educational services to adult students since the early 1970's.

The ABE program strives to enable students performing at beginning literacy levels to upgrade their reading, language arts and math skills and then, depending upon motivation and circumstances, continue at the GED level. These programs provide individualized instruction within a classroom setting. Also, the site is convenient because the GED Testing Center is located on the ground level of the building. In addition to a full-time day program, ABE and ESL classes are offered several evenings a week at four strategically located schools within the City of Pittsburgh. The English as a Second Language (ESL) program provides instruction at basic, intermediate and advanced ESL levels. After completion of this program, students are prepared to enroll in GED preparation classes.

Since the program's inception the staff continues to personalize its approach to instruction and strives to match student interests, aptitudes and needs with current labor market demands. This maximizes the chances for students to realize success. Connelley serves a diverse population, many of whom have personal and/or learning differences. Always sensitive to the needs of adult learners, the staff attempts to create a non-threatening, caring environment in support of instructional programs.

Past Potential Realized

HOWARD BROWN

Today, Howard Brown is a respected community leader working with civic and church groups in the city of Pittsburgh. His devotion to the homeless and his desire to improve the neighborhood where he is a project coordinator are a direct consequence of the challenges he faced as a child and the adult education experience that changed his way of viewing his world. Howard grew up abused by an alcoholic father in a one-room house with no phone, television or heat and very little food. For a while, his older sister provided direction and order in his life. Howard spent the 60's and 70's rebellious and homeless. He participated in the civil rights struggles and the anti-war movement but remembers very little about those years. In his 20s, a friend introduced him to the self-help psychology of Carnegie and Benjamin Franklin and the homeless cause became his "calling" and his justification for existence.

In September 1991, he entered Connelley Technical Institute to learn a trade and simultaneously enrolled in an adult education class. Howard stated emphatically, "Due to my schooling, everything changed. I mean, totally everything." He still remembers his teacher, Florence Lynch, as his friend who took him under her wing, worked with him and encouraged him until he took and passed his GED tests. He explained that, prior to going to school, he lived a carefree spontaneous life, never going the extra mile. At Connelly, he got involved with every aspect of the school, worked on different projects, became friendly with students, teachers and even the principal and worked on the class graduation.

That involvement carried over to his life's work. As a project coordinator, he has arranged for improving his neighborhood's little league field, putting up concession stands, fencing it in and arranging for 140 tons of play dirt to redo the infield. He is now the caretaker of a neighborhood garden which was put in with the help of local civic groups and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. He is working on Operation Clean Sweep with the City of Pittsburgh to complete the clean up and beautification of the local business district and main streets. Furthermore, with the cooperation of local churches, 175 children and adults are beginning to paint and fix up project houses.

Howard looks at his life today and says, "It goes back to how I got changed around by going back to school. How it changed not only my life, but I would have to say it changed everybody around because they began to see somebody totally different, somebody who went from carefree, didn't care about nothing, to caring about everybody and everything."

***Director, Student
Support Services***

Theresa Banford



“My greatest learning is that education is a lifelong pursuit; it is continual and changes everything that you are and everything that you do!”

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

The Community Learning Center (CLC), which has provided literacy education to Kensington/North Philadelphia neighborhoods for 14 years, serves about 300 students annually. In addition to basic skills education in reading, writing and mathematics, GED preparation and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, CLC also works with students to improve their employment readiness. The agency's mission is to provide economically disadvantaged adults with literacy skills to help them effect changes in their lives and their communities. Toward that end, the agency strives to integrate students' lives into curriculum and program planning and to provide support to learners as they determine their next steps after leaving the CLC.

CLC is a learner-centered program. Students are actively involved at every level of the organization from setting their own short and long-term goals, co-constructing curricula and class activities, to taking part in assessment and evaluations of themselves, the staff and the program. Education at CLC is a process of development and growth for all, students and staff alike. What the staff learns from their students is integral to their own development as educators and individuals.

Past Potential Realized

THERESA BANFORD

After eight years, Theresa Banford has completed an educational circle, winding up right where she began at the Community Learning Center (CLC). But what a difference those eight years have made! In August of 1992, her husband of 20 years died of a massive heart attack. Terry had four school-aged children to support on a five-dollar-an-hour seamstress job. Overwhelmed, she sought therapy and her counselor suggested that she return to school. In January, 1993, Terry talked her way into an already-filled GED class at CLC and by June of that year, she had completed her GED, won a \$500 scholarship and registered at the Community College of Philadelphia. While working toward her associate degree, she did her first internship at CLC.

As a result of this internship, she received a scholarship to attend Temple University. Working part-time, completing an internship and going to school full-time, she earned her bachelor's degree in social work in May, 1998. But every time she got a degree, Terry felt the urge to "go on, go on" and so she went on. Although it was difficult, she kept her grade point average very high which qualified her for another scholarship. In 1999, she received her Master's Degree in Social Work from Temple University.

Today Terry is the Director of Student Support Services at the Community Learning Center. Her job is to provide support to CLC students to help them stay in the program and make the transition to work, job training, or higher education once they complete their goals at CLC. Terry says, "I love my work. I like to see the joy on students' faces when they achieve personal goals. Students come in and they say, 'I can't do this, I can't do this,' which reminds me of myself eight years ago. I say to them, 'Yes you can, yes you can' and I work hard to help them make the changes that will empower them to turn their lives around."

Last year, Terry coordinated CLC's graduation. She stood at the podium just as she had as a CLC graduate in 1993, this time giving a speech encouraging students to continue their education and to make it a life-long pursuit, something she had managed to do in her life.

***Family Center
Counselor***

**Ruth
Salters**



"If you put your mind to it, you can accomplish your goals and keep your life together."

GERMANTOWN WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

Since 1985 the Germantown Women's Educational Project (GWEP) has provided educational services to women, men and young adults living in Germantown and surrounding neighborhoods. Its core program provides classes in adult basic education including building basic reading, writing and mathematical skills, GED and test skills strategies. Supportive programs include onsite child care during class hours, group counseling from a social worker and resumé development and support for transition to work or employment.

In 1999, the Linda T. Ranieri mini-computer learning center opened at GWEP's main site allowing the center to offer computer assisted instruction in flexible formats for students who could not be accommodated in regular class offerings. Success at GWEP is measured by the progress students make towards their self-articulated goals, gains in subject areas, GED achievement, job attainment, retention or promotion and community and family leadership. GWEP's mission is to create a community based learning environment that is an anchor for individuals seeking to make progressive changes in their lives and the communities in which they live and work. The agency has a small committed staff of seven, wonderful volunteer tutors and a dedicated volunteer Board of Directors.

Past Potential Realized

RUTH SALTERS

Today, Ruth Salters is a commanding presence in her community as a family counselor providing homebound childhood development and as Vice President of the Germantown Community Cooperative Board which is a part of the Ann Casey foundation rebuilding communities project. Intending to become a guidance counselor, she is in her second year at the Community College of Philadelphia working toward a degree in social work with an emphasis on mental health. Ruth was always a likely candidate for success despite a few setbacks along the way.

All she needed to graduate from high school was English 4 when she married and moved to another state. She hoped to complete her degree in her new home but things did not work out that way. In 1983, she returned to Pennsylvania with her daughter and her son Fred, who had Menkes Syndrome, a rare disease in which a simple common cold could easily develop into life-threatening pneumonia. Although the need to supervise his care at home and during frequent hospitalizations kept her an at-home mother, she did find time to pursue her high school diploma.

In 1992, she enrolled in the Germantown Women's Educational Project GED classes, passed the GED tests in the fall of 1993 and participated in graduation ceremonies that summer. During her time in the program she played an important support role in the lives of many students and offered tutorial assistance to adult learners who needed help with the material she had already mastered. Her experience in caring for her son who passed away in 1997 led her to volunteer at his school. She helped in the classroom, assisted the teachers with specialized care and range of motion exercises that her son had needed and other students still need.

Her schooling and involvement with the community led to a job at the Germantown Settlement House where she assists in a program that started as a conflict resolution program and evolved into a leadership program for children from 5th to 8th grade. She also coordinates and facilitates the Teen Alive program which is an HIV/AIDS prevention/intervention program. She loves her job and believes that, "If you are going to build the child, you have to build the family around them also. It's great to see the outcome."

***Behavioral Health
Assistant***

**Romona
Mercer**



"I'm glad I went through with my GED. It opened up a lot of doors for me."

THE CENTER FOR LITERACY, INC.

The Center for Literacy (CFL) is the nation's largest community-based, nonprofit, adult literacy organization. Since 1968, it has been providing adult basic and literacy education throughout Philadelphia to adults who lack the reading, writing, math and English language skills needed to function in society. The mission of CFL is "to provide free literacy instruction and a wide range of other adult literacy services that respond to the diversity of individuals and enable adult learners to meet their goals." Toward this end, CFL practices a learner-centered, goal-oriented philosophy of instruction. In 1994, CFL was one of ten programs in the country to receive the U.S. Secretary of Education's Award as an Outstanding Adult Education and Literacy Program.

In FY1999-2000, CFL served 3,011 students with the services of 332 volunteer tutors and 55 professional staff at 107 sites throughout Philadelphia. Its diverse services include one-to-one and small group tutoring with trained volunteers and classes taught by professional educators. Its innovative and collaborative programs serve parents of Head Start and Even Start children, underemployed workers in many Philadelphia industries and businesses, welfare recipients who need literacy skills in order to pursue job training, parolees and probationers and members of the community who wish to improve their reading, writing and math skills.

Past Potential Realized

ROMONA MERCER

Romona Mercer has a new husband and a new job but is still pursuing her college education. Her Americorps Scholarship ended but she is searching for other scholarships so that she can complete her associate degree in behavioral health and social work at the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP). She knows that she needs formal training to “help people hands-on. That’s what I love and it’s what I do now, but I don’t have any formal training.”

Romona knows a lot about helping people. She married at 16, had a baby, moved away from home and dropped out of school. Her early life style which began with cigarettes and beer and escalated to crack cocaine ended 22 years later when she made up her mind to get off drugs, obtain her GED diploma and get off welfare. In November 1991, just six months into her own recovery, she started Streams in the Desert, a residential program for women who were recovering from drug addiction. She began taking women into her home, pooling their resources and setting rules to provide essential support. One year later, she entered the Center for Literacy’s (CFL’s) adult education program and two years later received her GED diploma.

In addition to working as a teacher’s aide in the Top/Win program, she has worked as a part-time CFL Student Coordinator to provide support to other students in the program. Her schooling has included courses at the Bible Institute geared toward becoming a counselor. Now that she is married, she has stopped taking women in recovery into her home and instead works as a mentor referring them to appropriate programs. Her church plans on purchasing a house to continue the Streams in the Desert program.

She is currently attending CCP part-time and working with problem children. She describes her feeling of accomplishment when she sees a life change. “It could be a child that’s going through a lot of problems at home. The most recent is a fellow named Joseph. They told me he is 18 years old and he’s autistic. He doesn’t speak but he does understand. When I took the job, he wouldn’t do anything. It just seemed like nobody took the time to talk to him like people would talk to anyone else. He would sit there all day; go to the bathroom on himself. He didn’t participate with the class. Now Joseph is doing everything except talking. I feel like that is my most recent accomplishment that I am proud of. I worked with him for two months. He sharpens his pencil. He attempts to write his name. He can spell his name. He can identify his name tags. He uses the bathroom and he smiles. Everyone who came in contact with him at school said they had never seen him smile. And that is the greatest.”

***Family Literacy
Program Teacher***

**Linda
Mallery**



"If it wasn't for the adult center, I probably would not have been able to take the college entrance test and pass it."

ALTOONA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Altoona Area School District Adult Basic Literacy Education Program provides basic literacy, GED Preparation classes, Employability – Career Counseling and English as a Second Language instruction to over 1000 adults annually. The services are provided at the Community Education Center which is open 8 am to 8 pm daily and at satellite education centers throughout a four county region in Central Pennsylvania. These education centers are located in schools, Head Start Centers, county jails and community centers.

In addition to literacy programs, the district operates employability enhancement programs for the Department of Labor and the Department of Public Welfare.

Instruction in all programs is individualized and delivered in small group settings, one-on-one tutorials or via the extensive use of computers and Integrated Learning Systems available for the adult literacy student. The professional staff consists of certified Elementary and Secondary teachers and counselors.

The school district measures the success of its program by the successes of its students.

Past Potential Realized

LINDA MALLERY

Linda Mallery has a new job as a teacher in the Altoona Area School District's Family Literacy Program. She teaches parents and children at their homes, providing adult education, childhood education, PACT (parents and children together) and Parent Time services to eight families in the Altoona Area School District. A graduate of Altoona's Community Education Center, Linda's history starts out like many other young women in the 1970s. At the age of 16, she dropped out of high school to marry her husband John and within three years had two children.

At the age of 19, Linda felt a need to continue her education. Her family was very supportive and she enrolled in the Community Education Center. After passing the GED pretest with high scores, she took and passed the GED test in March, 1975. Two years later, she enrolled in a Vo-Tech Key punch program and was hired in the tax office while still attending classes.

After her third and last child was born in 1979, she stayed home to raise the children until her husband was laid off from his job and had trouble finding employment. She then returned to work as a cashier in a grocery store. But she realized that her real interest was in pursuing a social service career. She began volunteering in a domestic abuse shelter but understood that she would have to seek further education in order to make her dream come true.

Sixteen years later, she returned to the Community Education Center to prepare for college entrance tests. Her 58-year old mother accompanied her. After Linda, she became the first female in her family to earn a GED diploma. Linda worked hard on learning algebra and geometry and passed the college entrance exam without a problem. At the age of 36, she enrolled in college. While working as a wife, mother, student, employee and volunteer, she completed college with a 3.88 GPA. When she graduated in December 1995 with a BS in Social Work, she was immediately hired by the social service agency where she had volunteered for eight years. Linda is a lifelong learner and has taken workshops whenever they were available at her agency, noting, "It's something that sparks my interest. I am always working on continuing education because education is very important to me."

After working at her social service job for five years, she was approached by the school district to start its new Family Literacy program. The school district was very glad to get her. Linda remembers the help she received from the Community Learning Center adult education program and states, "It has really helped me personally and professionally. I am hopeful that it will be around for other people. I think it is a very needed program. It's something that gives opportunities for people, opens many doors for them and I am just grateful that I was able to take part and having it available to me."

**Network
Administrator**

**Madeline
Rosado**



“Working hard for your education will pay off. It did for me and I don’t plan on stopping now. Success is mine for the taking.”

THE LUTHERAN SOCIAL MISSION SOCIETY/LUTHERAN SETTLEMENT HOUSE

The Lutheran Social Mission Society/Lutheran Settlement House (LSMS/LSH), which opened in 1906 as part of the Settlement House Movement, created childcare, kindergarten, vocational training for women and family relief efforts. In 1976, LSH offered its first GED class and now offers 20 free adult basic education classes, along with individual tutoring, vocational and educational counseling and computer-assisted instruction to some 600 students each year.

Classes are held both at the Settlement House and off-site at neighborhood schools, libraries, hospitals and residential treatment centers. On-site classes share a computer lab where students build their basic education skills, learn basic computer literacy and word processing and can “surf” the Internet as part of the LSH Community Internet Access program. Teachers in the LSH program are committed to involving learners in the learning process, assisting them in defining their goals, providing support as they progress, providing a safe environment for questioning and learning and enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem. The agency says, “We value all students’ life experiences, respect their individual purposes for pursuing an education and assist them in identifying and meeting their goals.”

Past Potential Realized

MADELINE ROSADO

No one looking at Madeline Rosado today in her role as Network Administrator for Lutheran Social Missions, Lutheran Settlement House would mistake her for the teenager overwhelmed by problems at home who dropped out of school and ran away with her boyfriend. As a girl, this talented, energetic woman was abused physically and emotionally and remained virtually a prisoner in her own home for 14 years. When her boyfriend was jailed, she saw a way out. In October 1995, she enrolled in the GED program at Lutheran Settlement house as the first step toward getting a good job in order to support herself and her seven children.

She had loved school growing up and although her first day in class was tense, she soon realized that she had a knack for school and for computer software. By the time she earned her GED diploma in April 1996, she was providing support and encouragement to her classmates. Madeline was offered a job as a part-time computer lab assistant at Lutheran Settlement House. She learned to install and troubleshoot software and soon began to be comfortable taking apart and repairing old and used equipment.

In just two years, she has gone from being a part-time computer assistant to LSH's full time computer lab administrator. She now is able to build networks and has gone back to school for her Certification in Network Engineering (CNE). Madeline had to take out some loans to pay for her schooling but is gradually paying them back. She explains, "I am making more money than I was before, but I'm also not on welfare anymore so, therefore, all of the expenses are coming out of my pocket."

Madeline has learned to set short term and long term goals and see them to fruition. She has just purchased a house and is looking forward to the day when she can move out of the city. But, of greatest importance to her, is that fact that she is now her own person, that she no longer is dependent, that she can achieve and make her dreams come true. Her seven children are all growing in their own independent way and she has her grandson at home. She believes that keeping her family together will be her biggest success. She encourages them and all adult students to continue in their education saying, "Working hard for your education will pay off."

***Community Outreach
Volunteer***

**Carlos
Baretto**



"I want to be a good example for my children because they are in school now and I try to teach them how important it is to keep in school and to make a future."

NORTHWEST TRI-COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT ADULT EDUCATION

The Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 is a governmental entity created by the legislature to provide a wide range of educational and support services to local school districts within designated geographical areas. For the past 16 years, IU #5 has been providing adult basic and literacy education to adults who do not have basic reading, math, writing and English language skills. The adult education programs operated by the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit are organized so that they are reflective of the changing need within the area of workforce development. The focus of activities is to develop the learner's ability to utilize basic skills for employability.

Past Potential Realized

CARLOS BARETTO

When Carlos Baretto was 15, his father left home and he became the man of the house. He supported his mother and three younger siblings by working as a laborer and a bodyguard. Then, for 15 years he earned a good living as a professional wrestler until broken bones and a broken marriage ended his career. In 1987, when he moved from Puerto Rico to Pennsylvania, the only job he could get was doing heavy farm labor. At his brother-in-law's suggestion, he enrolled in ESL classes at the Quality of Life Learning Center run by the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit.

Before long, Carlos' ambition and eagerness sparked the entire class. He wrote lists of words he heard most often, looked them up in his dictionary and studied them at home. Years later, these lists are still being used in the ESL classroom. He not only helped classmates in school but became an advocate for non-English speakers helping them to navigate the complex worlds of American employment, housing, medicine, law and welfare. At his church, he drives the transportation van on Sundays, mows the lawn and performs other maintenance duties.

In July of 1996, Carlos was hired by the adult center as a part time outreach specialist to visit families in the neighborhood and promote the importance of learning English. A full time employee of Wal-Mart since October 1997, he continues his outreach and community services on a volunteer basis. He works with people from many different countries, Irish, Polish, Russian, Puerto Rican and Mexican people. He provides translations and transportation and encourages them to learn English, using himself as an example. He explains, "I had to wake up at 3 or 4 in the morning to work on the farm to 7 or 8:00 p.m. Then I went home. I did this seven days a week. It was very hard. Sometimes I didn't see my kids. I didn't see my wife. It was hard. I said to those people, 'Everything I do, you can do too. I'm here to help you.'"

He also wanted to set a good example for his children. When his daughter told him that she wanted to go to college and be a mother and be a pianist, he said, "Go ahead, no problem. Don't worry about anything. I will work to give you what you want. Keep trying and don't stop." After he passed the GED tests, his next step was to study to become a mechanic and earn his state automobile inspection license. He believes it will happen. By setting an example, Carlos teaches his children "how important it is to keep in school and make a future."

Future Promis



e Revealed . . .



ADAMS
COUNTY

Kevin Sites



"It took me a long time, but my tutor was good to me; she really helped me."

LINCOLN INTERMEDIATE UNIT 12

The Special Projects Division of the Lincoln Intermediate Unit (LIU) has administered adult basic and literacy education in York, Adams and Franklin Counties for the past 30 years. Students are served in approximately 15 community classes that include ABE, ESL, GED preparation and job services. Classes are also held in the three county prisons for ABE, ESL and GED. Basic literacy students are matched with one-to-one volunteer tutors through the Adams County Literacy Council and the Franklin County Literacy Council. This year a Family Literacy strand was added to the adult education services and Adams and Franklin Counties. LIU also operates an official GED examination center where approximately 350 candidates are tested yearly.

Over the past several years, York County Literacy Council, York County High School, Manito, Inc. and Waynesboro Area School District have consolidated their adult education programs with Lincoln Intermediate Unit. The services these agencies provide complement the classes provided by LIU. In combination, these programs serve over 1,800 students each year in the three-county region. With such a diverse program, students are afforded the opportunity to continue their education regardless of their age, geographic location, language spoken or competency level.

sponsor:
Henry Wardrop

KEVIN SITES

On November 10, 1991, Kevin Sites was involved in a serious car accident that left him in a coma for six days. Kevin suffered severe leg and head injuries and his prognosis was not good. However, Kevin had always been a fighter. Because he was small in stature, there were many times that he had protected himself from taller and bigger kids in school. Now he was fighting for his life and against most odds, he came out of the coma. After the accident, however, Kevin's brain did not function as well as it had prior to the accident. He could not remember many of the things he had learned during his nine years of schooling and his reasoning ability was very poor. Kevin would know a fact one day and not remember it the next.

After his recovery, Kevin took a construction job that involved long travel to job sites. His leg continued to bother him and he suffered from constant headaches and memory problems. Realizing that he could not continue in construction forever and that he had a son to take care of, he knew he needed a GED to obtain a good job. Kevin began taking GED classes, at times traveling 70 miles from construction sites to classes in Adams County. When he failed the GED after studying for a while, Kevin knew his brain was not working correctly and he would need special help.

He contacted the Adams County Literacy Council and was matched with a tutor. Slowly he and his tutor went over exam questions, analyzing each one. Kevin tried hard, sometimes taking four hours to do 30 questions. During this process, his memory and reasoning powers improved and he re-learned forgotten facts. Although he still suffered from severe headaches, he never complained. During the course of his tutoring, he again injured his leg but continued to work and study in spite of the pain. He rarely missed a session and he was always cheerful and polite.

Kevin learned that he could apply for special accommodations for GED testing. He received approval to have double time for testing as well as to use a calculator. On April 11, 2000, eight months after his tutoring began, he passed the GED exam. He now has a new outlook on life. Kevin Sites has gone from the brink of death to a life full of promise because no matter how difficult the situation, he never gave up.

Present Success Rewarded

A L L E G H E N Y
C O U N T Y

**Yolanda
Medina**



"It was hard going back to school while I was raising three children but I am glad I did it."

ALLEGHENY INTERMEDIATE UNIT – EVEN START PROGRAM

The Even Start program at McKeesport is administered by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Early Childhood and Family Support Services (ECFSS). ECFSS is composed of traditional and extended day Head Start Classes, family Child Care Partnerships, Head Start in collaboration with Community Child Care, Home Based Head Start, Family Centers, First Steps Program, Early Head Start and Project Elect.

The Even Start program is a McKeesport Area School District program, whose community-based partner is Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh. The program is in its 9th year of operation. In response to the demands of welfare reform on families, it offers 300 hours of program services per week. This includes 22.5 adult education hours, 2.5 hours of Parent education, 5 hours of parent and children together (PACT) time and 30 Early Childhood education hours.

While their children are receiving early childhood services, Even Start parents have the opportunity to prepare to take the GED tests or receive other basic adult education instruction in a supportive environment. A computer lab makes it possible for students to receive an introduction to using the computer. The co-location with CareerLink enables students to have access to multiple resources that assist them in the job-seeking process, including a variety of workshops. Another component of the Even Start program is home visits where parents and children learn together with a learning facilitator. Other collaborators include McKeesport First Steps and McKeesport Family Center which provide home visits focusing on literacy activities in a parent and child context.

sponsor:
Mary Galbraith

YOLANDA MEDINA

Yolanda Medina dropped out of school after finishing the 10th grade. In 1995 she enrolled in an Even Start program and began working toward a GED diploma, but family duties kept her from continuing in class. With three children, 11, four and two, life was busy at home. But in September 1999, she returned to Even Start determined to attain her GED diploma.

Her daughter Anita is an active preteen. Irie is a precocious toddler and Antonio is a four-year old with a smile that would melt anyone's heart. At three months of age, he had been diagnosed with Lissencephaly, a condition similar to cerebral palsy. Antonio can't walk, so Yolanda carries him to and from his special chair. He has seizures, but Yolanda discovered that she could bring him out of them by singing to him. A child with special needs is a challenge for any parent, but she did not let the stress that she felt show. On the days that Antonio attended his school, she made sure that Irie had her undivided attention. They had special time to bond as they enjoyed working together on parent and child activities.

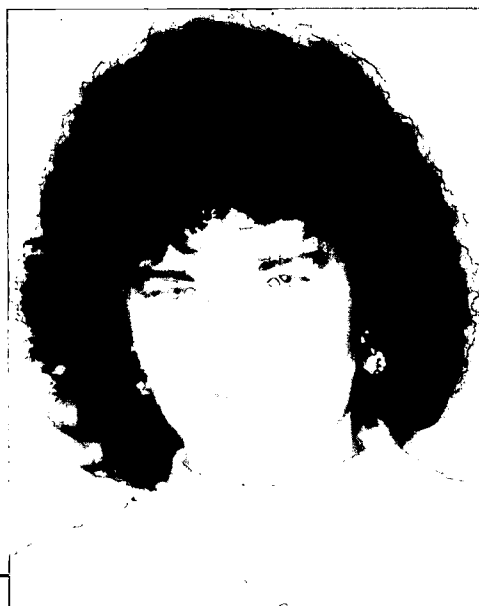
Yolanda said that the year she worked toward her GED, she coped by keeping a daily routine. She rose early to get lunches packed and other chores accomplished before spending her day in the classroom. The children adapted to that routine and everyone made it to school or appointments on time. Yolanda volunteered two times a week at the Head Start her daughter attended. She read books to the children, helped serve lunches and just enjoyed being with the children. She managed to balance her volunteer work, her education and her role as mother. In August 2000, she earned her GED diploma.

That early interaction with young children and her experience with Antonio's disability influenced her decision to pursue a career working with children who have special needs. Yolanda is a parent empowerment partner in the Family Literacy program improvement initiative SEQUAL and is working hard to get her driver's license. She has sparked interest in family literacy by sharing her story with the local newspaper and by encouraging eligible family members and friends to enroll in Even Start. Yolanda's father came to America from Puerto Rico as an adult but wasn't able to finish school because he needed to work to help support the family. He is very proud that his daughter was able to complete her education. Yolanda's 11-year old daughter Anita is probably the one person who is most proud of her mom's accomplishments. Yolanda is a wonderful role model for her daughter and an inspiration for her to finish high school.

Present Success Rewarded

C A M B R I A
C O U N T Y

Shirley Burns



"Learning to read has changed my life!"

GREATER JOHNSTOWN CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER

The Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center (GJCTC) is a non-profit public school institution established in 1970 to serve the needs of both high school and adult students. Situated on 90 acres in a 300,000 square foot building, GJCTC is a state-of-the art facility that encompasses academic, technical and vocational classes for 425 secondary students, 170 post-secondary students and 520 adult basic education students annually. Under the direction of the school's Administrative Director and the Supervisor of Adult and Post-Secondary Education, the adult education staff consists of a financial aid officer, a coordinator of career development and job placement, two coordinators of ABE/GED and Literacy Education, a counselor, 15 instructors, 15 tutors, clerical and secretarial personnel.

Literacy classes operate throughout the year on an open entry/open exit basis. Literacy classes include ABE, ESL, GED, remedial, family literacy workplace literacy and tutoring. An evening alternative high school diploma program is also available. Classes are held in eight locations throughout Cambria County with a variety of time schedules. No one is denied an opportunity because of lack of transportation or scheduling problems. All classes in the Greater Johnstown area are within walking distance and classes are offered in the morning, afternoon and evening. GJCTC is proud that no student has ever been turned away.

All students receive caring, individual attention from the dedicated, well-trained staff. Adult learners are assessed through an Individual Education Prescription and the TABE and their progress monitored. Tutors are available to students who need them and, whenever appropriate, ABE program participants are encouraged and assisted through references to other agencies or educational programs. Most importantly, adult students receive the guidance and structure necessary for success not only inside but also outside the classroom.

sponsor:
Kim O'Malley

SHIRLEY BURNS

When Shirley fell and injured her head in the 9th grade, she began to lose some of her learned academic skills. Because of uncontrollable seizures, her family had to take her out of school. But in September 1998, at the age of 38, she enrolled in a remedial reading class. On her first day, her hands shook so badly that her teacher thought she was going to have a seizure. Although she could not read any words on the entry test and knew only how to sign her name, she stated that she intended to learn how to read and was not going to give up.

Shirley kept her promise. She attended classes four nights a week at two different sites and as of June 30, 2000, had accumulated 703 instructional hours. Currently reading at a 4th grade level, she has developed many daily living skills. She can read recipes and write out a grocery list with the help of a chart displaying pictures and labels of food and order for herself when she goes to a restaurant. She has learned to use a computer in class and has bought a computer with educational software to use at home. Although her seizure disorder prevents her from driving, her ability to read a bus schedule and street signs has given her the freedom to go out into the community without being dependent upon someone for transportation.

Shirley has become a confident, determined woman who recently admitted that for the first time in her life she could say that she loves herself and feels she can accomplish anything she wants to do. Now, the class "social butterfly," she introduces herself to all new students and shares her success story with them. During a class break, she often walks to the store with her friends or meets them for coffee before class at a local restaurant. She helps students who are having a difficult time with their reading and tells them not to give up. Shirley often encourages others in the community to come with her to class. She speaks to strangers on the bus about learning and voluntarily hands out school flyers telling where and when adult basic education classes are held. Two students are presently attending classes because of Shirley's efforts.

She will attend remedial reading classes until she is ready to enroll in a GED class. After she passes the GED, she hopes to get a job taking care of children with disabilities. Shirley feels that she would also enjoy a job involving housekeeping since she takes pride in being able to maintain a clean home. She looks forward to the day when she can pick up any book and read it all by herself. She especially would like to be able to read the Bible. When asked what learning to read and coming to class has meant to her, Shirley replied, "It changed my life."

Present Success Rewarded

DAUPHIN
COUNTY

Sharon Louise Wallace Heath



"If you're hungry enough for education, you will succeed."

CUMBERLAND VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Cumberland Valley School District has offered a High School Diploma Program for Adults for the past 23 years. The School District's philosophy is that education is an ongoing process and should be available to everyone, regardless of age. The "Achieve" program is a chance for adults to return to school to earn a high school diploma.

The Adult Diploma Program combines academic proficiency with life skills competencies. These life skills competencies are derived from subject areas established by the Cumberland Valley School District for graduating seniors. Through the completion of the competencies, the adult learners gain a tremendous working knowledge of the community in which they work and live. Upon entering the competency portion of the program, adult learners work at their own pace, meeting every third week with teachers in order to review their work. A staff of six dedicated teachers works to ensure students' success in meeting their goals.

Cumberland Valley School District Diplomas are granted to the adult learners upon completion of their programs of instruction. When they receive their diploma, these adult graduates are qualified for acceptance into all branches of the military, four-year colleges, the Pennsylvania State Police service and registered nursing programs, among many other continuing education programs.

sponsor:
Wendy Latham

SHARON LOUISE WALLACE HEATH

Sharon Louise Wallace Heath left school in the 11th grade to care for her five younger siblings because her mother was suffering from a long-term illness. In September 1999, some 25 years later, she entered the Cumberland Valley School District High School Diploma Program. While enrolled in the program, Sharon Louise maintained her job. She went to work two hours early each morning in order to leave work at an earlier time so that she could attend evening classes. Her husband would then come to pick her up at eight o'clock. She was motivated to succeed because her school-aged children were depending on her. Many an evening she found herself and her two children sitting at the dinner table doing their homework while her husband helped them all. She also became a regular patron of her local library utilizing all of its resources. Sharon Louise acknowledges help from several classmates, her aunt, the teachers in the program and her husband.

Her new self-confidence was fostered through her work in the program. Evidence of this confidence is her intention to acquire a driver's license. She is still exploring her educational goals since earning her Cumberland Valley Diploma on June 5, 2000. She plans to take some college courses during the summer. Her ultimate goals are to enter the field of nursing or social work in order to continue her passion for helping others.

Sharon Louise believes in leading through example. Her hard work and ability to set and reach her goals have been an inspiration to her children. She and her husband also act as parents to her 11-year-old nephew, and she has been a strong role model by demonstrating the importance of education. Sharon Louise cares for elderly neighbors in poor health, often spending several hours a day working with them. An active member of her church, she counts her spiritual devotion as one of the reasons she wished to complete the Cumberland Valley High School Diploma program. In the community, she is quick to recommend the adult program to people she meets without a high school diploma. Her sheer joy and unmistakable pride while walking across the stage to accept her diploma provided the greatest endorsement of the adult education program.

Present Success Rewarded

DAUPHIN
COUNTY

Clara M. Snyder



"It doesn't matter how old you are. It's important to get your diploma. If you want it, go for it!"

TRI-COUNTY OIC

In an effort to meet the vocational and academic training needs of the unemployed and underemployed in the Harrisburg area, Tri-County OIC was founded in 1965 by the late Franklin L. Henley. Aware of the frustrations of the poor people of Harrisburg, Reverend Henley had heard of a grass roots manpower-training program which had started a year earlier in Philadelphia. This program offered hope, opportunity and employment potential through academic remediation and vocational training to many who previously had been discouraged because they were considered untrainable and unemployable.

In November 1965, Reverend Henley called together the Black ministers of Dauphin County. During his meeting he explained the OIC philosophy and received a commitment from the ministers to start an OIC program in Harrisburg. The following January, a kick-off rally was held at St. Paul's Baptist Church. Fifteen hundred dollars was raised and another \$20,000 was pledged to start the OIC program. Support for the project grew from the private and public sectors. Others who were concerned about the plight of the disenfranchised in Harrisburg joined in the effort.

Within two months classes began. The Harrisburg OIC became the second such organization in the state and the third in the nation. In March of 1966, Mr. George Smith was hired as the first Executive Director. After its meager beginnings with donations and volunteer recruiters, counselors and instructors, OIC has grown into a full service adult education provider. With sites in over 20 locations, OIC offers recruitment, outreach, basic literacy skills training, vocational skills training, job development, counseling and placement services to over 1,000 students each year.

OIC remains a grass-roots organization that changes to meet the needs of its students while maintaining the philosophy of its founder - Reverend Franklin L. Henley. OIC believes it is the right of every person to live a life of dignity and self-respect. OIC offers every person the opportunity to begin to claim that right.

sponsor:
Eric Epstein

CLARA M. SNYDER

In 1952, Clara was forced to drop out of school in the 7th grade. She married Harold and together they raised three children. In 1985, Clara began attending GED classes. For over 15 years, she walked, biked, car-pooled and drove to classes in Williams Valley, Elizabethtown, Loyalton and Lykens, traveling approximately 3,000 miles during the 15-year span. Clara adapted to the different locations as well as to the changing GED protocols. She faithfully showed up at each and every site and never complained, despite medical challenges such as the loss of a kidney, a hysterectomy and hand surgery. Her class only met once a week and she often requested additional homework.

Clara has been a mentor and a role model to all Tri-County OIC students in the Upper Dauphin-Schuylkill County areas. When her community was devastated by the closing of local coal mines and textile mills, she spread the word that ABE/GED classes were available and made sure the transition from the factory floor to the class room was seamless. In addition to helping older adults, she was able to relate to younger students who were forced to leave school prematurely. In many instances, she knew the student, their parents and their grandparents. She served as administrator, hall monitor, truant officer, "substitute teacher," class liaison and official "welcomer." She tracked supplies, contacted students when school was delayed, canceled or rescheduled classes and always made sure the room was clean and tidy. She has worked as a crossing-guard at an elementary school for 18 years and this fall began speaking to elementary children about staying in school and completing their education.

Her hobbies include reading, biking and gardening. She is a member of the United Methodist Church and is active in adult education classes, bereavement support, food drives and fundraising for the Bethesda Mission and sings in the Senior choir. Clara celebrated her 48th wedding anniversary on May 3, 2000 and on July 1, 2000, she celebrated her 65th birthday by becoming a GED graduate.

Present Success Rewarded

LANCASTER
COUNTY

James Lamar Groff



"I had great determination to succeed, but I am eternally grateful to those who helped me along."

LANCASTER-LEBANON INTERMEDIATE UNIT 13

Lancaster Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13's adult education program serves approximately 3,000 learners each year in Lancaster and Lebanon counties. It also houses the Southeast Professional Development Center and operates GED testing centers in Lancaster and Lebanon counties. Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL), Family Literacy and Workforce Education are among the many program areas offered through IU 13.

The adult education program works collaboratively with adult learners, school districts, the Lancaster and Lebanon CareerLink centers and community agencies to offer comprehensive services to adults who want to improve their basic skills to better meet their responsibilities as family members, workers and citizens. Classes are offered at a variety of locations and times in an effort to accommodate the busy schedules of the adults who participate.

sponsor:
Linda G. Michel

JAMES LAMAR GROFF

A man who possesses an iron will to succeed and who has persevered when faced with many difficult obstacles, James Lamar Groff has spent countless hours improving his reading skills. Only recently diagnosed, dyslexia had been a significant obstacle to his past educational and personal pursuits. Educationally, it was necessary for him to increase his reading level since he had graduated from 8th grade in 1964 at the age of 16 reading at a 3.8 grade level. The difficulty in first identifying and then locating support for dyslexia throughout the years had also hindered his ability to communicate effectively with others, including his family. Misunderstandings were frequent and frustrating,

For the past eight years, he has been tutored through the Lancaster Literacy Council and attended Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13 adult education classes. He worked daily on his reading skills and studied with his tutor one night a week for two hours throughout the year. Between December 1997 and the spring of 2000, Lamar completed over 300 hours of study in a GED program. Within that time-period, he successfully completed the Social Studies, Science and Math portions of the GED test without any State-approved accommodations.

Thanks to Lamar's patience, dedication and focus on his goals, he was able to receive psychological testing and gained approval for accommodations for GED testing. He then retook the three areas already passed in addition to the two he had left to complete. He passed all five areas of the GED test and received a diploma from the Commonwealth in June 2000.

For the past 21 years, Lamar has been a volunteer fire-policeman and runs with both Blue Ball and New Holland Fire Companies, attending an average of two to three fire calls per week. He works approximately 50 hours per week, six days a week at New Holland Farm Machinery. A great many people now stand behind him in support of all the hard work and dedication he has had in the pursuit of his GED. Through all of his difficulties, frustrations and obstacles, Lamar has persevered and stayed focused, in addition to maintaining his volunteer work, full-time job and family life.

Present Success Rewarded

LEBANON
COUNTY

**Carmen
Martinez**



"I greatly appreciate the opportunities opened up to me by completing my GED through the Family Literacy Program."

LANCASTER LEBANON INTERMEDIATE UNIT 13

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sponsor:
Lynn Campbell

CARMEN MARTINEZ

In 1975, Carmen Martinez was born into an abusive and drug-addicted family. At the age of eight, she and her sister were abandoned by their mother and taken in by their maternal grandmother. Grandma, who supported a drug habit, told the girls and the local welfare office that Carmen's mother was dead in order to collect the children's benefits. The girls were often neglected and cooked meals were a rarity. When Carmen's mother returned with her "stepfather," the family moved to an abandoned building with no running water or heat. Her nightmare worsened when her stepfather began to sexually abuse her. School became her only safe haven. "School let me get away from all that was happening because I had friends there and could pretend that everything was o.k.," she said.

Carmen was encouraged when her real father was released from prison and entered drug rehabilitation; but when he died from AIDS, she became depressed and angry. She had two new baby sisters and not even school, her journal and poems could lift her above her constant unhappiness. By the age of 16, she had given up all hope of ever having a normal life and dropped out of school.

The turning point in her life came at the age of 19 when she met her boyfriend and future husband, Luis. He encouraged her to seek counseling before their first son was born. When the couple moved to rural Pennsylvania, transportation and childcare barriers kept Carmen from GED classes. After moving to Lebanon, she enrolled in the Lebanon Family Literacy Program housed at her son's elementary school. She felt comfortable there and spent so many hours in her son's Headstart classroom that she was elected to the Headstart Policy Council.

Carmen is currently involved in the school's Parent Teacher Organization and often speaks to students about the importance of education. She also volunteers with the Family Literacy program and parent resource room. In the spring of 2000, she completed her GED tests and was chosen to speak at graduation. She credits her teacher for much of her success, saying, "She made it easy because I could talk to her about anything. She even helped my husband get a job."

After graduating, Carmen was hired as an aide in the summer Family Literacy program. To date, she has completed one class at Harrisburg Area Community College. She plans to continue her Social Work education and volunteer work after the birth of her third child. At 25 years of age, Carmen's life has rebounded from childhood neglect and abuse to academic achievement through her successful participation in a Family Literacy program.

Present Success Rewarded

L U Z E R N E
C O U N T Y

Robert Ceselsky



*“Whatever you put into the adult education program,
you’ll get back more in return.”*

LUZERNE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADULT LEARNERS’ TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Adult Literacy Training and Assistance Program (ALTA) is a community-based special program of the Community and Workforce Developmental Division of Luzerne County Community College. One of the college’s objectives is to “provide special projects, programs and services designed to assist non-enrolled students in meeting their unique learning and personal needs.” Developed in response to Pennsylvania’s literacy legislation initiative, ALTA began operations in January 1987. Its goal is to enable adults who wish to further their education to obtain an adequate basic skills background for college studies or employment. Close ties exist with welfare agencies and the CareerLink Center and businesses in the areas request instructional services for their employees.

Certified instructors and trained volunteers are used in cooperative and individualized settings within an open entry-open exit program. Clients are identified through agency referrals, self-referral and outreach activities. Classes are held at 25 sites including four Housing Authority development sites, eight Head Start sites, the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center and a psychosocial vocational rehabilitation clubhouse.

Instructors build learning teams within their instructional sessions so that there is a positive team atmosphere where students from diverse backgrounds feel comfortable being together and working together. Through strong community linkages, the implementation of individualized and cooperative learning structures within ALTA instructional sessions, the expertise of knowledgeable, supportive instructors and ABLE funding, the Luzerne County Community College’s ALTA Program has served 6,000 adult learners.

sponsor:
Debbie Trulock

ROBERT CESELSKY

Robert Ceselsky, a 32-year-old adult learner, is a legally blind individual with cerebral palsy who was diagnosed with chronic mental illness and dyslexia. Undeniably, he faced adversity daily when he attended classes for learning disabled and physically handicapped students in high school. His mother, a single parent, supported him and encouraged him to focus on normalcy. However, when his mother died, he was left in a state of turmoil. Referred by Community Counseling Services to Step-by-Step, a residential living environment, he became a member of the Greenhouse Center, an international clubhouse program that assists the chronically mentally ill in their endeavor to obtain vocational and educational opportunities, enhance social skills and become an integral part of the community in which they reside. Rob's center had a collaborative arrangement with Luzerne County Community College Adult Learners' Training and Assistance Program and he was able to register for classes in November 1999.

Rob enrolled at an intermediate ABE level with the goal of achieving competency in reading and spelling and improving his basic skills for personal growth. Although walking was extremely difficult for him due to his cerebral palsy and visual handicaps, he would arrive unassisted at instructional sessions even in adverse weather conditions. Furthermore, he arrived with a lighthearted humor and dedication to increasing his basic skills. He often told jokes and encouraged other adult learners by saying such things as, "Give it a try," or "You won't know unless you try." Rob practices exactly what he preaches, for he works out at the YMCA regularly, attends outpatient therapy and continues to be an active member of the computer training, education and food service units at the Greenhouse Center.

Throughout the year, he rode public transportation and walked several blocks to attend adult education sessions. From November 1999 to August 2000 he accumulated 149 hours of instructional time. Advancing from ABE to high adult secondary education level, he gained 19 points on the CASAS reading posttest and nine points on the math. He redefined his initial goals to include that of enrolling in a higher education program. During the fall of 2000, Rob began college level courses majoring in Criminal Justice. He is now an ardent leader, daily overcoming adversity and showing that goals can be reached through action, just as his mother had told him.

Present Success Rewarded

S N Y D E R
C O U N T Y

Susan M. Sprenkel



“Don’t quit something you start because you think it’s hard or because you run into problems. You just work a little harder and it will be worth it in the end.”

TIU ADULT EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING CENTER

The TIU Adult Education and Training Center began in February 1984 as a small subcontractor to the local Job Training Act (JPTA) office. The Center is now in its 16th year of dedicated service and growth in Mifflin County. Beginning with one GED program for 20 participants, the Center has expanded through a diversified funding base to serve 1,500 local participants in a variety of programs each year. Services include adult basic education and GED preparation, Even Start and Family Literacy programming, Welfare-to-Work programs, basic education for the homeless and incarcerated, job search instruction and career counseling, job development and placement, workplace education, at risk youth counseling, GED Test administration and professional development for adult educators.

The Center is open full-time with ongoing classes year-round. Programs impact all age groups from birth to senior citizens and all backgrounds from those who have never worked to dislocated workers with decades of experience. A staff of over 40 supports the Center’s wide variety of activities. The Center is administered by Tuscarora Intermediate Unit #11. Funding from state sources include Pennsylvania’s Departments of Labor and Industry, Welfare, Community and Economic Development and Education.

The Center strives to provide quality programming and accomplishes its goals with the support of the agency, elected officials, the community and most importantly, program staff.

sponsor:
Barbara A. Goss

SUSAN M. SPRENKEL

Susan Sprenkel thought her life couldn't get any better. She had a terrific family and a great job. However, after hearing rumors that she would soon be a dislocated worker, she realized that she would be facing the future without a job and, more importantly, without a high school education. She decided to pursue a GED diploma and in July 1998 enrolled in the TIU Adult Education & Job Training Center program. In order to attend class, she asked her boss if she could work all night shifts and he readily agreed. It was not easy working nights, getting up at lunchtime to prepare to come to school and taking care of her family. There were times when Susan wanted to quit because she was so tired. Then she would stop and think about what she had always told her four children, "Don't quit something you start because you think it is hard or because you run into problems. You just work a little harder and it will be worth it in the end."

After Susan received her GED diploma in October 1998, she took Computer Basic Skills and New Choices/Job Search classes. She then enrolled in the Academy of Medical Arts and Business to prepare for a career as a Medical Assistant Specialist. While still studying at the Academy, Susan accepted a job at Family Health Associates in McClure. Her job involved working with a neurologist doing EEG brain wave studies. She would work till 3:00 p.m. and then travel for an hour-and-a-half to get to classes which started at 5:00 p.m. and ended at 10:00 p.m. Once again, she told herself that it would be worth it all when she was finished!

However, "finishing" included 500 hours of an internship. Susan maintained a high academic status throughout her internship and received eight certificates for academic achievement and six certificates for perfect attendance when she graduated with an associate's degree as a Medical Assistant on May 5, 2000. She then took a three-hour test to get a Registry Degree which is comparable to the licensing test for an LPN. Currently working as a Medical Assistant, she is continuing her education to obtain her Associate's degree in massage therapy in order to own and operate her own business.

She frequently visits the Adult Center to share not only her successes but her initial feelings of frustration and fear. Her message is always the same, "Don't let other people talk you out of going back to school. Don't be afraid to come out of that comfort zone and take that big step. Apply yourself and learn all you can because the decisions you make now will affect you for the rest of your life. Most importantly, don't quit! It's worth all the hard work in the end."

Present Success Rewarded

FUTURE PROMISES REVEALED

THE ROAD AHEAD

I want to be a good example for my children because they are in school now, and I try to teach them how important it is to keep in school and to make a future. I want them to keep going to school and possibly to college. Don't worry about anything. I will work to give you what you want. You can teach your brother. He is small and doesn't know anything. I'll help him and I'll help you too. Keep trying and don't stop. Do it for your future.

I am very proud of all my grandchildren and love spending time with each one of them. I encourage them to learn by providing educational toys and reading books to them. My efforts are paying off. Bradley, my oldest grandson, is the second highest reader in his first grade classroom.

I'm not on welfare any more. I went back to school for a certification in network engineering ... I have purchased a home. My most positive achievement to date is raising my children. My children are all prospering at home. I have seven children and an eight-month old grandson who has cerebral palsy.

I was a stay-at-home mom due to my son being handicapped ... I volunteered at my daughter's school and my son's until my son was able and strong enough to go to school. My son passed away three years ago. My daughter graduated from girl's high this year. I am now in my second year at Community College of Philadelphia. I am working with one of the largest community-based organizations since 1996. I have traveled as their spokesperson. I am working with children, seeing the accomplishments they have made because of what I have to offer; seeing growth in myself.

When I first started classes, my daughter was only 18 months old. I was a single mother and it was very hard. I had to work to keep a roof over our heads and food on the table and try to get an education. About 3 months after I started with the literacy council, I had to tell my daughters that I was learning to read and they thought it was really great. Then when I had homework, they could help me and they were encouraging. My children are 18, 16 and 12 now. My son is a straight A student. They are very proud of me getting my education.

Having children of my own was one of the biggest motivations in going back to finish my education. When I signed my youngest child up for K3, it mentioned on the application that if you needed your GED you could check the box. So I checked the box and enrolled in the Even Start program. After I got my GED, I continued to go to the Even Start program because Chase was still eligible to attend even though I was finished with my studies. I went to class and helped other Moms with their studies and workshops. I also helped at Lafayette School with a student, four days a week, to help him become a better reader. I would like to go to college to become a teacher. That's what I would like to do.

Terry Banford's son Anthony who is junior class president at The Williamson Free School in Philadelphia said whatever he does in life is inspired by his mother's example:

My dad died eight years ago, leaving my mother, a high school dropout, with four children to take care of. She got her GED, went to community college and earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in social gerontology at Temple University. She now teaches at Philadelphia Community Learning Center, helping others get their GEDs. My mom is my idol; she always beats the odds to succeed and that's what I want to do. She has big shoes to fill, but I'm trying.

OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENTS 2001



Front row (left to right): Shirley Burns, Kevin Sites, Clara M. Snyder, Robert Ceselsky

Back row (left to right): Carmen Martinez, , James Lamar Groff, Sharon Louise Wallace Heath, Clara M. Snyder (not present at photograph, Yolanda Medina).



Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education

These students were honored at the Pennsylvania Midwinter Conference 2001 co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education (PAACE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE).

PAACE's membership includes teachers, tutors, counselors, professors, administrators, librarians, students and volunteers who work with adult learners in institutions of basic and higher education, businesses and community agencies. In addition to an annual Midwinter Conference, PAACE sponsors special interest sections and publishes a newsletter, journal and membership directory.

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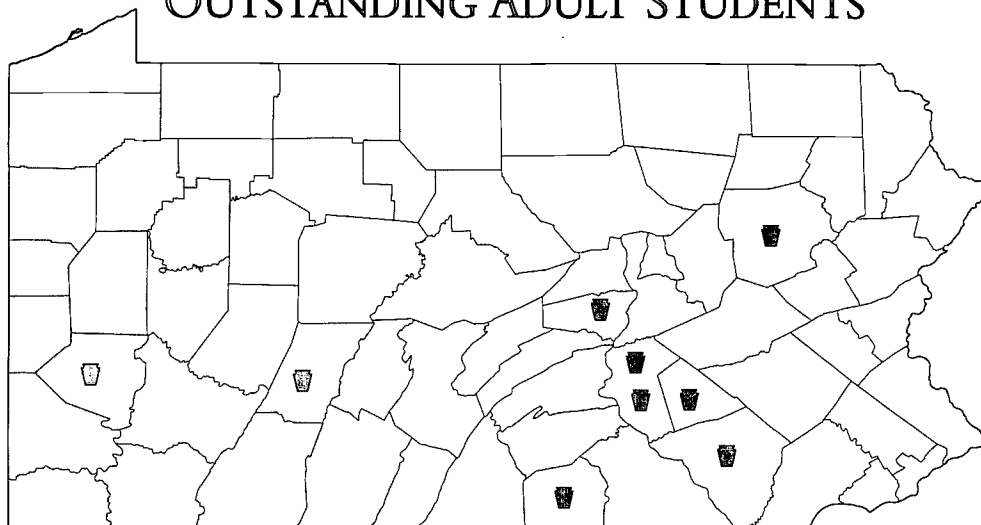
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SUCCESS STORIES 2001

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Project Director and Editor: Sherry Royce

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